

AMERICAN THEATRE

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Feasting in the Festival Garden

New York's annual experimental theatre sampler boasts plenty of chills and frills, but the real attraction is carefully crafted mayhem.

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This year some of the coolest things to see have been APAP-focused but festival-free. Over at the Tank on 36th Street, Erin Ortman is directing Rodrigo Nogueira's *Real*, a charming chamber work, deliberately structured like a fugue. Thanks to designers Ao Li (set) and Kia Rogers (lights), the tiny space glows with rich color, which seems to trap the actors like insects in amber. There are two intertwining dramas: that of a modern woman who starts hearing music out of the past, and of a boy in the 1930s who defies his father and starts having visions of the future. The play's melodrama (in both senses of the word) could use a slightly lighter bow, but Gabriela Garcia (as a friend with a foot in both timelines) is doing precise and beautiful work which deserves to be seen.